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Address of the Department Commander.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE POTOMAC,
GRAND ARMY REPUBLIC,
" WASHINGTON, D. C., February 5, 1906.

To the Thirty Eighth Annual Encampment.

COMRADES: To the highly honorable and responsible position of Department Commander I was chosen one year ago by the unanimous vote of the encampment. I think I then fully realized the dignity and honor of the position, but did not fully understand the labor involved. I have at all times endeavored to do my best, but whatever of success I have had is due to the cordial support of all my comrades.

MEMBERSHIP.

The members in good standing December 31, 1905, number 2,268, a net loss of 67 during the year. The loss by death was 103; conspicuous among the deceased were Senior Vice-Commander Elect Estes and Judge Advocate Scott whose virtues and services were commemorated in special orders. Our losses accentuate the need of vigor in recruiting. Much can be done in this regard by earnest, persistent, and tactful efforts. Every comrade should endeavor to secure one new or transferred member. My own success in recently getting five members, and promises from two more men, for my own Post emboldens me to urge upon each comrade the opportunities I believe are before him. Our numbers ought not to diminish during the next few years. It may be that small Posts should consolidate or disband and thus form larger and stronger Posts which would prove more attractive recruiting stations. But the best we can do, "passing away" is being written on the pages of history of our order; we should not, however, beat a "retreat" nor admit defeat. Every noble and praiseworthy sentiment calls upon us to "close up" and "get ready for inspection."

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE.

One of the most important and perplexing matters we deal with is the work of this Committee. Comrade Entrikin the Chairman, has been most earnest in his work and the members most faithful. I have myself taken up 95 cases apart from those handled by the Senior Vice-Commander. To these I have given much thought and labor, but success has been meagre. What I have done is a part of the Committee's report, where it belongs.

New appointments or even reinstatements of comrades or widows will

E462
163
1906

be difficult to procure in the future, but department officials are kindly disposed towards the retention of comrades.

The cordiality with which I have been received by all officers of the Government, speaks well for the standing of the Department and has mitigated the disappointments I have met with. Our thanks are especially due to Hon. Wm. Loeb, Jr., Secretary to the President; to our comrade Hon. J. J. McCurdy, auditor for the Post Office Department; and to Messrs. Ludlow and Lyman of the Treasury Department.

Past Department officers have always responded to all calls and Past Commander Kimball has been especially helpful.

RELIEF COMMITTEE.

The work of this Committee requires a combination of patience, kindness, firmness, tact and painstaking. In the hands of such a body of men presided over by such a comrade as our Junior Vice-Commander, we may have unbounded confidence in the proper conduct of its affairs.

DEPARTMENT EXPENSES.

At the last Encampment a committee was authorized to take this subject into consideration; their findings are well worth your serious attention. At the last meeting of the Council of Administration it was voted to recommend that the salaries of the Asst. Adj. General and Asst. Q. M. General be each reduced \$50.00, making the compensation \$175.00 and \$125.00 respectively. The salaries of these officers are now too small, but retrenchment somewhere is a necessity, as the present income does not meet expenses.

AMENDMENT TO CIVIL SERVICE RULES.

In compliance with a resolution of the 37th Encampment (*vide* p. 59, Journal) the Dept. Commander, the two Vice-Commanders and the Asst. Adj. General called on the President to secure exemption from examination for Ex. Soldiers who were recommended by their chiefs for promotion, to the grade of clerk-copyist.

The matter was referred to the Civil Service Commission and returned with the decision, which the President approved, that "the only safe rule is to restrict the veteran preference, where the Statute places it, to original entrance into the service."

ATTENDANCE AT FUNERALS.

At the request of the Post Commanders a petition was presented to the President asking that *per diem* men in the Government service be allowed to attend funerals without loss of pay when officially detailed. This privilege was secured in the Govt. Printing office, and is hoped for in

the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. It was ascertained that in some of the Departments, men on annual salary were not excused, and at my request Comrade Robt. Aiton, Judge Advocate, took up the matter to secure uniformity if possible. After a careful and painstaking investigation it was found that this privilege is generally held by Department officers to be a gratuity "without warrant of Law." The Judge Advocate reported that to press the matter farther would imperil the privileges we now have, and fully concurring in this opinion I was compelled to drop the matter.

STEPHENSON MEMORIAL FUND.

At the Denver Encampment I pledged this Department for \$100 towards this praiseworthy object. The Asst. Q. M. General has already forwarded \$125.00 of which that generous Comrade, Past Commander John McElroy gave \$25.00. Potomac Post No. 11 contributed an additional \$15.00 making \$140.00 sent from this Department this year.

LADIES PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATIONS.

The Woman's Relief Corps, the special auxiliary of the G. A. R., the Legion of Loyal Women, the Ladies of the G. A. R. and the Daughters of Veterans are all organizations meriting our heartiest commendation. They should be aided and encouraged and thus made effective in their grand aim. I desire to especially commend the latter order. Every comrade having daughters should do his best to induce them to join this patriotic band of young women. "The Daughters of the Confederacy" are very numerous and enthusiastic in our midst. The daughters of the men who saved the nation from disintegration and the flag from spoliation should be more so.

SONS OF VETERANS.

This noble organization of patriotic young men, our "Kinsmen according to the flesh" and our natural successors, thoroughly imbued with the patriotic spirit of their sires, is most worthy of our earnest and cordial support. They are loyal to the core to us and the principles we maintained, and their aims are to unselfishly perpetuate the memory of their fathers' deeds and to uphold the flag you saved by your valor. No comrade who has sons should fail to do all in his power to induce them to join this order that the memory of our deeds may not perish from the land. Steps should be taken in the near future to bring these young men into closer touch with our Memorial Day and Relief Committees that they may be qualified to supplement and soon take up our work.

SPANISH WAR VETERANS.

This most worthy and patriotic order, our younger "brothers in arms,"

is in hearty accord with this Department. They are entitled to our warmest praise for their patriotic ardor and their helpfulness on all occasions when we unite our efforts.

Between these two noble bands of young patriots there should be no unfair nor unworthy rivalries. "There is glory enough," and work enough, "to go all around," and they should vie with each other in honoring our flag and country.

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TEMPORARY HOME.

No more beneficent institution exists among us. The Board of Managers, the Superintendent, and the Chaplain are untiring in their devotion to its interests. The annual visitation of the Department officers was very delightful and emphasised former causes for congratulation, but the need of better accommodations was keenly felt. The bills now pending before Congress for the purchase of a new home should be aided by all the influence individual and organized we can exert. The Lecture by Bishop McCabe in the interest of the Home was a great success.

ESCORT TO THE PRESIDENT, MARCH 4, 1905.

The securing of this privilege, so highly prized by this Department, had engaged my attention even before my installation, and Commander Hart generously co-operated with me in my efforts.

Although some opposition was encountered, the President did not hesitate to grant this great honor to his "Comrades" of the Civil and Spanish Wars, and both Departments turned out in large numbers and with our magnificent Old Guard made a fine showing. The Spanish War men co-operated nobly with us and the occasion was one to be remembered with gratitude and pride.

MEMORIAL DAY.

The Soldiers "Holy Day" was fittingly and beautifully observed at all the cemeteries in our jurisdiction.

The Sunday service at the Metropolitan M. E. Church was an inspiring occasion and Dr. Frank M. Bristol delivered a most stirring and eloquent address to a large and enthusiastic audience. The services at the 13 cemeteries were all dignified, chaste and impressive. At Arlington, always the center of attraction, the services at the Tomb of the Unknown by the Department officers efficiently aided by the Ladies' Organizations, were impressive; the Orations of Senator J. B. Foraker and Chaplain C. C. Pierce, U. S. A., and the poem of Comrade DeWitt C. Sprague, were replete with lofty and inspiring thoughts clothed in choice language. The music of the Marine Band evoked great praise and the singing of Comrade George H. Lillibridge was, as always, a marked feature. The Spanish War veterans furnished our guard and in every way co-operated with us. Too much stress cannot be placed upon a proper observance of this day. Attention is being called to this outside our Order. Genl.

Moore commanding the Department of California in a General Order calls for a recognition of the sacred character of the day.

Gov. Durbin of Indiana, late Col. of the 161st Ind. Vols., Spanish War, in a proclamation called upon the people to observe the day as a solemn and holy day, to refrain from picnics, excursions and such amusements and attend memorial services.

Our order should in every way foster this spirit.

The contributions for our memorial fund fell \$41.67 short of last year but the expenses were \$57.57 less, leaving a balance of \$2,759.82, \$15.90 more than the balance of 1905, in the hands of the Treasurer. With the approval of the Council of Administration I recommend that 70c. per capita be paid to the relief funds of the Posts, \$300.00 be paid to the Spanish War veterans and the balance of \$872.22 be transferred to the Department Relief Fund. The increased amount for Department relief is based upon my own knowledge and the judgment of our highly esteemed junior Vice-Commander Thomas H. Martin, and the increase to the Spanish War comrades is equitable.

Too much praise cannot be given to Past Commander George H. Slaybaugh and his efficient co-workers on the Finance Committee for their zeal and fidelity. Past Commander Hart was especially helpful in raising \$250.00 among business men. I believe others could help greatly among this class. All the subcommittees were efficient and faithful.

On motion of Past Commander Faunce, the Memorial Committee passed the following resolution and recommended its adoption by the Encampment. Under the head of Memorial Committee, Article VII, of the By-Laws add, "The Department Commander is empowered to appoint the various sub-committees of the Memorial Executive Committee as soon after his installation as he may deem expedient."

Col. Frank Hume of this city, formerly a Confederate soldier, appeared before the committee and in a most patriotic spirit suggested that Congress be memorialized to donate obsolete ordnance and make an appropriation for casting a mammoth bell to be placed at Arlington to be tolled at soldiers' funerals. Col. Hume himself offered a generous contribution in aid of the work. The committee appointed to consider the matter expressed their high appreciation of the patriotic spirit of Col. Hume and approved the scheme, but feared it might interfere with other plans more necessary at the time. No further action was taken.

The need of a new amphitheatre at Arlington is recognized by all, but the Committee to further that object has, by its unanimous voice, decided to allow the matter to rest this year, lest it interfere with the greater need of the Temporary Home.

FLAG DAY.

The proper observance of this day gives opportunity for the inculcation of the noble principles of patriotism and devotion to flag and country.

Under the direction of Past Commander Arthur Hendricks all the public schools were provided with comrades who participated in these attractive exercises.

Comrades should cordially co-operate in coming years.

THE NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT.

This gathering of the representative men of our order, held in the beautiful city of Denver during the week beginning September 4, was a harmonious and effective meeting. Attention is called to important legislation published in General Orders Nos. 3 and 4 from National Headquarters. Our Comrade Past Commander Charles C. Royce was mentioned for Junior Vice-Commander-in-Chief and we were anxious to further his candidacy but at the last he declined to be put in nomination.

The transportation Committee consisting of Comrades Freeland, Bennett and Young made satisfactory arrangements for the trip and 107 comrades, ladies and gentlemen availed themselves of the low rates.

This Department had attractive Headquarters at the Savoy and our rooms were the centre of much enjoyable but quiet hospitality. In our parade we greatly missed the Old Guard, but though our numbers were small we evoked much applause all along the line of march.

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS.

The annual visitations to the Post have been made unusually attractive by the large attendance of the staff and aides, and by the high character of these gentlemen, to whom the Department Commander is greatly indebted for their loyal support.

Two very delightful receptions were given to high officials of our Order, viz.; Commander-in-Chief Tanner and Past Commander-in-Chief Warner. These functions were very acceptable to all concerned and were, as Comrade Tanner said, "warmly dignified." The Old Guard added much to the occasion by their escort duty, and the expenses were met by private contributions. The New Year's call on the President was very largely attended and the calls upon the patriotic societies of ladies were much enjoyed.

The visits of the Post Commanders to the various Posts is a social and fraternal feature which should be greatly encouraged. This spirit of comradeship should ever be on the increase.

And now the official mantle of Department Commander is about to fall upon one more than worthy to succeed me. If I have in a small degree approached the value and efficiency of the long line of faithful commanders who have preceded me and thus earned your commendation, I am content.

To all the officers of the Department and to my personal staff and aides I can give unstinted praise for their comradelike spirit and faithful service.

All past Department officers have been most considerate and cordial in their support. The Post officers, and the members of the Employment and Relief Committees have my warmest admiration. To every comrade of this Department I tender the love and fidelity of a soldier. By all I have been treated with more consideration and kindness than I have merited.

The principles of our order are most noble; let us strive to exemplify them with increasing fidelity. We are nearing the sunset of life. If we are true to the best there is for us, the prediction will be verified "At evening time it shall be light."

"Be strong in our fraternity,
 In charity and Loyalty,
 Give every needy veteran cheer,
 Of want relieve the widow's fear;
 Keep bright the record you have made
 In honor of the noble dead;
 That when in future time to come,
 As slow to the beat of the muffled drum
 Is borne the form of the very last,
 And our order is numbered with the past,
 The cause of that order shall not sever
 From the Nations heart of hearts forever.
 And when our fatigue on Earth is o'er,
 And the drums are beat on a better shore,
 The ranks may be full when the line is made
 To form the Eternal Dress Parade."

Yours in F. C. & L.,

A. P. TASKER,
Department Commander.





